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Contact us...

Address: DANTES-TTT
6490 Saufley Field Rd.
Pensacola, FL
32509-5243

Phone: 1.800.231.6242

Email: ttt@voled.doded.mil

Web site: www.ProudToServeAgain.com



DANTES Troops to Teachers program wins national award

DANTES' Troops to Teachers was awarded The Met Life Foundation/Civic Ventures BreakThrough Award on May 31, one of 10 organizations recognized for "innovative organizations that tap the passion and experience of people over 50 to improve society."

Since 1994, Troops to Teachers, a Department of Defense/Education cooperative program, has helped more than 10,000 military veterans transition into second careers as public school teachers. Nearly half of the 10,000 Troops to Teachers are 50 or over according to a 2005 National Center for Educational Information (NCEI) report, a majority of whom retired after more than 20 years of service.

"This award is a testimony to the successful partnership between the Department of Education and The Defense Activity for Non Traditional Education Support (DANTES)," Troops to Teachers Chief William McAleer said. "The value of the Troops to Teachers program, to our nation's school and the children in them is immense

and quite beyond calculation. We at DANTES and the Troops to Teachers program are honored by this award. Personally I am honored and humbled by being a part of this great endeavor called "Troops to Teachers."

The award winners were announced the same day as a report from The Conference Board about labor challenges facing nonprofits and other public services. The report finds that while nonprofit growth outpaces other sectors, talent shortages are already

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(L-R) DANTES Chief Dr. Jeff Cropsey; Emily Gillingham, Associate Director, Civic Ventures; TTT Chief William McAleer; Sibyl Jacobson, President, MetLife Foundation; and Phyllis Segal, Vice President, Civic Ventures, at the BreakThrough Awards ceremony in Washington D.C.

Want to learn more?

[Click here](#) to learn more about the BreakThrough award, including a full list of winners.

Around the states

Thirteen participants selected Teachers of the Year

Turning their experience in the military into success in the classroom, Troops to Teachers participants collected various awards and honors during the 2006-07 school year, highlighted by 13 TTTs selected their school's Teacher of the Year.

Walter Jackson, a 26-year Air Force veteran and teacher-of-the-year honoree (see box for full list), teaches science at Isaiah Haines Elementary School in Brown Mills, N.J. He collected the award after only his second full year of teaching.

"I am proud of all the airmen, soldiers and sailors that have taken up this great profession of teaching," Jackson said. "To me it is one of the most rewarding opportunities I have experienced and embraced in my life. Working with great people and providing our students with core knowledge, as well as sharing our varied experience in life, is just another way we give back to our community and serve our country."

Another TTT science teacher, Stefan Smolski, was honored with a state-wide award. The 23-year Navy veteran teaches at Oak Glen High School and was selected the West Virginia Earth Sciences teacher of the year.

"Veterans know how to lead and be led. And much of the leadership that we learned and applied while on active duty can be directly applied to the classroom," Smolski said.

Marine veteran Jeffrey Sharrock was selected Wagoner (Okla.) High School's teacher of the year and the Wagoner School District teacher of the year, making him a finalist for the state award which will be announced in the fall.

Teachers such as Jackson, Smolski, Sharrock and other award winners exemplify the high quality of individuals participating in Troops to Teachers, making the program's success possible. Thanks and congratulations!



Walter Jackson

TTT Teachers of the Year, 2006-07

Name, School, Subject, Branch

- Lori Aten, Lufkin (Texas) High School, Special Education, Navy
- David Bray, Morehead High (Eden, N.C.), Army
- Susan Byther, Osprey Elementary (Brevard, FL), 2nd grade, Army
- Jeffrey Dent, Wrens Middle School (GA), Social Studies, USAF
- Valentino Garcia, Sneed Middle School (Florence, S.C.), Language Arts, USAF
- Yvette Collins Haili, Watkins Nance Elementary (S.C.), 5th grade, Army
- Anthony Howard, La Villa Middle School (Jacksonville, FL), Math, Navy
- Al Jackson, Wilbur Watts (N.J.) Intermediate, Science, USAF
- Walter Jackson, Isaiah Haines Elementary (Brown Mills, N.J.), Science, USAF
- Donald Sinacori, Matilda Harris Elementary (Ga.), 1st grade, Army
- Robert Sivils, Spear Middle School (Okla.), Music, Army National Guard
- Jeffrey Sharrock, Wagoner (Okla.) High School, American History, USMC
- Anne Smith, Caminiti (Tampa, FL) Exceptional Center, Special Ed, Air Force

TTT News

Spouses to Teachers adds Arizona

After adding Europe and the Pacific in the past year, Spouses to Teachers (STT) has expanded stateside with Arizona becoming the 15th state offering the program.



Arizona joins California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Utah and Virginia.

The Department of Defense pilot program helps military spouses interested in teaching or

currently teaching by providing counseling and guidance on state-specific certification requirements, certification options, available scholarships and state employment resources. Up to \$600 also is available via a voucher process to reimburse the costs of testing fees associated with teacher certification/licensure.

Eligible participants include spouses of active duty personnel, Selected Reserve and National Guard and Individual Ready Reserve recalled to active duty.

For additional information, contact Spouses to Teachers at (800) 231-6282 or DSN 922-6282, or visit www.SpousestoTeachers.com or e-mail the program at stt@voled.doded.mil.

To view a Public Service Announcement video on STT, [click here](#).



Spouses to Teachers participant Kate Bramanti teaches 2nd grade in the Killeen (Texas) Independent School District.

Congresswoman visits TTT classroom

In April, Representative Doris Matsui (D-CA 5th) visited the classroom of TTT participant Kelly Sullivan, an Air Force veteran now teaching English at Hiram Johnson High School in Sacramento (see photo at right).

Rep. Matsui is a strong supporter of the TTT program and has co-sponsored the Troops to Teachers Improvement Act, which seeks to re-define "high-need" schools for purposes of more teachers qualifying for financial assistance.

"We need to think outside the box to encourage more people to come into teaching," Rep. Matsui told local radio station 1530 KFBK.

Sullivan spent 21 years in the Air Force

and is in her second year teaching freshman at Johnson High.

"Just the experience of the military, the age, the wisdom," Sullivan told the radio station about the benefits of hiring veterans.

"There are so many things you learn in life that you can bring into the classroom."

Rep. Matsui was also interviewed by two local TV stations.

The Troops to Teachers Improvement Act is working its way through Congress.



Hire in Advance heading west

Transition program adds LA and San Diego districts

Troops to Teachers' Hire in Advance program added two of the largest school districts in the country after agreements between TTT and the San Diego and Los Angeles Unified School Districts were completed in May.

The Hire in Advance Program guarantees active military members a teaching position up to three years before they separate/retire from service, providing a seamless transition from the military to the classroom while helping fill a growing teacher shortage.



The two California districts bring the total number of Hire in Advance programs to six, joining the Aurora (Colo.), Clark County (Las Vegas), Prince Georges County (Baltimore/D.C. area) and Portsmouth City (Hampton Roads, Va.) school districts.

"The opportunity to remove the apprehension from transitioning from the military to a new career in education while still on active duty is a great benefit for future teachers who are currently serving," said Michael Carlson, California TTT executive director.

Want to learn more?
For more information on the Hire in Advance program, including contact information, [click here](#).

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is the largest school district in California and the second largest in the nation with over 730,000 students and over 34,000 teachers. San Diego is the second largest school district in the state and home to the major Navy/Marine installations in the country.

Working directly with the participating school district, Hire in Advance participants will be interviewed and have their background and initial credentials reviewed. If qualified, they will be guaranteed a position within the district. A specific school is not guaranteed, but the agreement secures a job in the district at the credential-qualified grade level. A salary projection also is provided.

Individuals will receive a signed "Letter of Intent for Employment" a year to two years in advance outlining specific contingent requirements, such as testing and education requirements.

For more information on the LAUSD and SDUSD Hire in Advance programs, contact Rick Nathanson, California's TTT Recruitment Specialist, at (619) 908-3607 or by e-mail, rnatnhan@sdcoe.net.



LAUSD and TTT sign a Hire in Advance Agreement. (L-R) Robert Bartron, CA TTT Recruitment Specialist; Roger Buschmann, Chief Human Resources Officer LAUSD; Rick Bergman, Manager, CA TTT; Vivian Ekchian, Deputy Chief Human Resources Officer LAUSD; Michael Carlson, Executive Director, CA TTT.

In the news and on the air

National male teacher shortage sparks interest in TTT participants

With the percentage of male public school teachers worsening across the country, the number of male teachers produced by Troops to Teachers is even more impressive — and newsworthy.



TTT participant Bernard Alidor, a teacher at Pensacola's Spencer Bibbs Elementary, appeared on the Today Show.

TIT's large percentage of male participants was noted in several newspaper stories recently, along with a profile by NBC's Weekend Today Show.

The media attention grew out of a report by the National Education Association (NEA) revealing the number of male teachers in kindergarten through grade 12 has hit a 40-year low at 24.5 percent, with the percentage of male elementary teachers at an all-time low — down from 17 percent in 1979 to 14 percent in 2005.

Conversely, more than 80 percent of teachers hired through Troops to Teachers is male with 20 percent of participants teaching at the elementary school level.

The Today Show segment noted there was one reliable source of incoming male teachers: the military. The show

interviewed Navy veteran Bernard Alidor. Alidor teaches kindergarten at Spencer Bibbs Elementary, a low-income school in Pensacola, Fla.

Alidor tells the Today Show his love of teaching outweighs everything else.

“A hundred years from now, it won’t matter what kind of car I drove, how much money I had in my bank account or what kind of house I lived in,” said Alidor, who was selected his school’s Teacher of the Year for the 2005-06 school year. .

“But if I touch the life of a child I’ve made an impact on the future.”

Spencer Bibbs Principal Debra Simpkins talked about the special impact a male teacher can have on her students.

“They’ve seen fathers that are not there for one reason or another,” Simpkins said. “And so they needed to see that there are males who are helping to raise children.”



Alidor

Read all about it!

Here's a selection of TTT newspaper stories from the past months:

- “Ex-Marine finds new way to serve”, Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, June 6, ([link](#)).
- “Battlefield to Classroom”, St. Petersburg Times, May 8, ([link](#)).
- “Call of Duty”, Teacher Magazine, May 1 ([link](#)).
- “Ex-soldiers take experience to the classroom”, Memphis Commercial Appeal, April 24, ([link](#)).
- “Retired military continue service”, Orlando Sentinel, April 3 ([link](#)).

Connections

TTT wins BreakThrough Award (cont.)

affecting critical service areas, including healthcare and social services. As baby boomers continue to retire, the report states, leadership shortages will worsen, threatening the sector's ability to carry out its social purpose mission.

"These organizations are at the forefront of what promises to be a critical transformation of our workforce, economy and ability to meet social needs," said Phyllis Segal, vice president of Civic Ventures.

Want to learn more?

For more information on Civic Ventures [click here](#).

employees can help them deliver on their critical missions."

Troops to Teachers is administered by the Department of Defense and Department of Education and managed by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES).

Have something to share?

Do you have an opinion, story, photo, news or any other item you think would make a good addition to *TTT Connections*, the Troops to Teachers newsletter? If so, let us hear about it.

E-mail Jim Scavino at ttt@voled.doded.mil.



If you know someone who has served, or is serving, in the military that would make a good teacher, tell them about Troops to Teachers.